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# *In The Hack*

SCHOONER CURLING CLUB NEWSLETTER



Volume 107

January , 2022

January 14-16	Sydney CC Cash Spiel - Cancelled
Saturday, January 22	Fun Night - Cancelled
January 28-29	Townhouse Fundraising Spiel - Cancelled
February 11-12	Sweetheart Lady's Spiel
February 18-20	Schooner Open Cash Spiel
Saturday, February 26	Fun Night
March 10-12	Schooner Fun Spiel
March 11-13	Ship Hector New Glasgow
Saturday, March 19	Fun Night
March 25-27	Sydney CC Spring Fling Mixed Spiel
April 7-9	2 on 2 Spiel - Team Entry
April 21-23	John Boneparte Memorial Closing Spiel
NOTE: All dates are tentative and subject to change. Check the club website or bulletin board for changes and additions.	

## League Roundup



League play in December was cut short by the Club's Holiday break and will also see a loss of January since the break was extended due to Provincial Covid restrictions imposed on the club. League play was originally scheduled to get back underway on January 3, then was postponed until January 13th and then again until the end of the month when the government extended restrictions further. We are hopeful that things will get better and further restrictions will not be imposed. League play will not officially resume until these restrictions end but, in the meantime, the Schooner executive has devised a plan to offer practice ice to all members with the schedule being roughly based on the league schedules. Practice sessions are limited to 10 or fewer people and we will try to accommodate the membership as much as possible. Most leagues will see practice time for teams scheduled every second week with times slated to begin on January 13th. All Covid protocols, rules and restrictions will be closely adhered to. Clubhouse limits of 50% of total capacity will also be followed but should not be a problem given the limit on participants. We understand that not all members will be comfortable with putting themselves at potential risk. We ask all members that, if you don't want to take advantage of your scheduled practice time to please notify your skip or drawmaster Richard Lorway (schoonerdrawmaster@gmail.com) so your spot can be reallocated. Given the limited number of people that can be using the ice at any given time, space is valuable and we don't to waste it. Once restrictions are eased or lifted, league schedules and playoffs will be discussed and modified as

need be. See the Schooner website or follow Facebook for updates and schedules.

Going into the Holiday break, in the Easy Side Mario's Mixed league the Leo Fraser rink is holding on to first place by a thin margin with only one loss against six wins for twelve points. The Fraser rink has recorded seven games while there are teams having only six games recorded, Gordie Cormier, Philip Edwards and Lonnie Howe, that also have one loss but are only showing five wins for a ten point total. There are also a number of other teams that are close in the standings that can make a run at overtaking first place before the end of round one. Once the first round completes, the amount of time remaining in the year will be examined and a plan for moving forward will be formulated.

The Schooner Doubles league is proving to be a favorite among participants in its inaugural season and has gone well so far. Lynn Kelly remains in top spot with twelve points thanks to six wins while suffering only a single loss to this point in the season. Bob Smith remains the only undefeated player but sits just behind Kelly in the standings with eleven points due to three tied games against four wins. Janet Gallivan and Keith MacEachern both have just one loss but with each recording two ties as well for a ten point total, sit in a four way tie for third. George Plumridge and Bill Farr join them with ten points, both having two losses. Georgette Sparkes has carried through her strong start to the season and sits with nine points. There are still lots of games left to be played so anyone can make a run at the front runners and take over top spot.

In the Schooner Men's league, Wally MacDonald's rink holds down first place with four wins against only one loss for eight points. the Gordie Cormier rink is close behind MacDonald with seven points, having three wins and a tie against one loss for seven points while Kevin Gouthro has six points but holds a game in hand, sporting a record of three wins and only one loss. A win for Gouthro in that makeup game would draw him even with MacDonald. Cormier has yet to play MacDonald in round one but Gouthro has suffered his only loss to the MacDonald rink when they played in round one. With a couple of games remaining in the first round and round two set to get underway after that where all teams will meet for a second time, there is lots of curling left and lots of opportunity for all teams to make a run at the regular season title.

The story of December in the East Side Mario's Team Entry League has to be the Russell Fitzgerald rink. After a slow 1-3 start to the season, Fitzgerald vaulted himself back into contention by going 3-0 in December, not just sporting that perfect record but also doing so by beating two of the league's top teams, the Stephen Leslie rink and the current holder of top spot in the league, the Kevin Gouthro rink. Fitzgerald now finds himself as one of a number of teams with eight points and tied for second place behind first place Gouthro who has twelve. Some of the teams tied in second have games in hand over some of the others. While Gouthro's four point cushion may look pretty comfortable right now, teams chasing him also have games in hand over him and that large loss to Fitzgerald to break an undefeated streak that has lasted all season could possibly show a chink in the armor that other teams can take advantage of. We'll have to wait to see how Gouthro's foursome can bounce back from that adversity.

## Ice Maintenance

Matinee curling will be returning to the Schooner schedule but likely not until after the current government restrictions are lifted. Friday afternoons may be added to the practice schedule if demand exists but, as of now, that is not in the plan. Further updates on Matinee curling will be coming soon.

Brian Laughlin and the Schooner ice crew were busy over the Holidays, doing a lot of work and maintenance on our ice. They did a flood to refresh the sheets and then a lot of shaving to bring them back into playable shape. Before all that happens, the ice is 'burned', a process by which a torch is used to melt the ice in certain spots to release dirt which then floats to the top of the water. The ice is then allowed to refreeze, capturing the dirt close to the surface and then the dirt particles are scraped off. Overall, a number of hours were spent on the ice to bring it back to early season form. Hopefully we will get to use it again this season once restrictions are eased off.

Long time curlers and those who have curled in other clubs will all attest to how good our ice really is in comparison to other places. Our ice is fast and very predictable in most cases, something not easy to achieve given our old building and sand based floor. Brian and the crew spend a lot of time and effort on the ice, not only doing maintenance over the Holidays but also with weekly shaving and other repairs that keep our ice in great shape all the time. We want to thank them and let them know how much it is appreciated.

## Turkey Spiel



The Schooner Curling Club's annual Holiday tradition, the Keltic Kubota Turkey Spiel, was held at the club from December 9-11. A full roster of sixteen teams, eight in the Thursday division and eight on Friday, took part, the first time in a while we have seen a spiel run with a full slate of teams. We are certainly thankful that we were able to run this event before Covid caused government to impose more restrictions and limit play at the club. Thursday night's opening games had the club filled with participants and spectators alike and Friday was much the same. On Friday night, everyone in attendance was entertained with an open mic night. Saturday was a full day of curling as all teams played two games each that day. Curlers were treated to lunch on Saturday to help keep energy levels up all day long. Heading into the final draw of the day, the Joe Erickson rink held a pretty commanding lead overall and it looked like they were a shoe in for first place. The Wally MacDonald rink had a chance to catch and pass them for first but would need to win their final game and take all six ends to garner enough points to capture the top prize. A monumental task for sure but one that MacDonald and his team almost accomplished, taking the game but falling just short of pulling off the upset, only winning five out of the six ends. MacDonald finished one point behind Erickson's rink who took first and won the Holiday Turkeys. Joining skip Joe Erickson was Kathy Gale and first-year Schooner members Alex Turner and Marnie MacDonald. Skip MacDonald was joined by Justin Humphrey, Gerard Polegatto and Paul 'Delio' Delassandro. Close behind in third place was the Lynn Kelly rink with skip Lynn, Eric MacLeod, Bernadette Cormier and Colleen MacLeod. Rounding out top five was the team of Richard Lorway, Lonnie Howe, Alison

## January Events Cancelled

Grapes and Connie Howe in fourth and Keith MacEachern, Bob Smith, Tommy Youden and newcomer Kyriakos Michelakis taking fifth. After a great weekend of curling, the spiel was capped off by a Holiday dance with music by DJ Jimmy. This was the first social event like this since the start of the pandemic. It was a great night and there was a big crowd that stuck around to party and ring in the Holiday season. A big thank you goes out to everyone who took part, especially all of the first year Schooner members and those from outside the Schooner ranks that joined us. Thank you also to the Spiel Committee for a great job in planning, organizing and running the event and to everyone else who helped out in any way. Without the hard work of our volunteers, events like this would not be possible. We also want to send out a huge thanks for spiel sponsor, Keltic Kubota, for the generous support. We hope everyone had a great time and will join us next year for the 2022 Turkey Spiel.

Due to the social restrictions imposed by the Nova Scotia Provincial government, all special events at the club have been cancelled or postponed. The Doubles Spiel that was scheduled for early January was cancelled as well as the Fun Night that was supposed to happen on January 22. The Townhouse Fundraising spiel in aid of Meals on Wheels is postponed with the assumption that an alternative date can be found, organizers can run the event given the new timeframe and that no further mandated restrictions will be put in place. League play has also been suspended for the month of January but a limited practice schedule will be setup as allowed under the restrictions. The Sydney Curling Club has been forced to postpone their Cash Spiel that was scheduled to start on January 14th. There were Schooner teams slated to compete in that event. Another event that was to see Schooner participation, the Ship Hector Bonspiel, held in four clubs in the New Glasgow area, has been moved from Early February to mid March.

Current restrictions are due to expire at the end of January. We are hopeful that the latest Covid outbreak eases before that time and that the government will not have to impose further restrictions that will limit league play and special events any further. Monitor the Schooner website and follow us on Facebook for updates as they become available.

## Sweetheart Spiel

The Schooner Club's Sweetheart Spiel is scheduled to run on February 11-12, just before Valentine's Day. This ladies-only spiel is open to all female curlers with an entry fee of \$30 per player, \$20 for Schooner members. Everyone will get three games, a wine and cheese reception on Friday night and dinner on Saturday. There will also be lots of prizes available to be won. This is always a great event and definitely a highlight of the Schooner schedule each year. We are happy to welcome back returning spiel sponsor CC Computer Solutions Inc. A big thank you for their support once again this year. Registration will open soon so keep an eye on the Schooner website and the club bulletin board for when sign up gets underway. This is always a very popular event and there is limited space so sign up early. You don't want to miss out on this one ladies.

## Schooner Cash Spiel

Arguably the premier event on the Schooner calendar for the season, the Schooner Open Cash Spiel is scheduled to take place on the long weekend in February running from the 18th to 20th. This is a team entry event and will be run in a draw format. Entry is \$200 per team and all entry money will be returned in prizes. Registration for this event is now open and you can sign up your team at the club or by contacting us by phone or email. All teams are guaranteed three games and there will be dinner on Saturday. There will also be snacks and entertainment provided throughout the weekend. Space is limited and there are already entries coming in so don't delay, get your team signed up soon.

## Schooner Fun Nights

Schooner Fun Nights were scheduled to return to the club on Saturday, January 22 but, given restrictions to events, we have no choice but to cancel it. There are two more Fun Nights scheduled for the season, Saturday, February 26 and Saturday, March 19, which is our special St. Paddy's Day Fun Night. We are hoping restrictions will be eased early enough for us to carry on with these events. Updates will be posted on the Schooner website, Facebook page and at the club.

Fun nights are social nights at the club that are open to both members and the general public. They are designed to introduce more people to the sport of curling and all members are encouraged to attend and bring some friends. They get going at 7pm and curling takes place all evening. There's pizza for everyone and maybe even a few prizes to be given away. The cost is \$7 for the public and \$4 for Schooner members. There's no better deal in town for a night of fun. Participants must be 19 years and older.

In keeping with provincially mandated rules, all participants must be double vaccinated and provide proof of that and ID. Masks must be worn when entering and moving about the club house but can be removed when seated. Masks are not required when out on the ice playing.

Even with all the new rules and precautions being taken, we will still have lots of fun and hope to introduce lots of people to the great sport of curling. Schooner Fun Nights are a great way to get out of the house with family and friends and enjoy a night out for just a few bucks. Plan to join us.

## 2023 Brier in Sydney??

The local curling community and all curling fans are on the edge of their seats waiting to find out if the local bid will be successful and the 2023 Tim Horton's Brier will be making its way to Cape Breton. Curling Canada is set to announce its decision by the end of January. While success of this first bid is not very likely, changes to the facilities requirements for the event have made it possible and the success of the 2019 Scottie's Tournament of Hearts in Sydney coupled with the huge success of Brier's held previously on the east coast, 2010 in Halifax and 2017 in St. John's Newfoundland, make it even more likely. Competing with Cape Breton for the 2023 event are two Ontario cities, London, who have hosted the Brier twice before, and

## Equipment

Barrie, a city that has never hosted a Brier. The 2022 Brier is being held in Alberta.

Even if Cape Breton is unsuccessful in this initial bid, just as we were in our initial bid for the Scotties, chances will get better the second time around. Given the western location this year, the central location of the cities that will likely see the Brier in 2023 and the fact that the east coast is coming due to see another Brier in the area as the 2024 Brier will be seven years since the event was held down this way, things are looking good for Sydney if we throw our hat in the ring a second time. Fingers crossed that the premier men's Canadian curling event could be held in the area for the very first time within a couple of years.

For anyone who doesn't know, Schooner treasurer, Lynn Kelly, also looks after equipment orders at the club. For anyone wanting to order any new curling equipment, see Lynn and she will set you up. There are a few catalogues at the club or you can shop online and then let her know what you want. There are discounted prices and shared shipping so you can save some money too.

## Happy New Year

The Schooner Curling Club and its executive committee would like to wish all members and friends of the club a very Happy New Year and all the best in 2022. So far it hasn't been the best start to the year given the resurgence of Covid in the community and the return of government mandated restrictions but we are hopeful that this will pass and we can, at some point, start to enjoy the year. It was a great start to our season with high membership numbers, some great events in November and December and a high energy level at the club and we hope that will continue and we can build on that in the near future. All the best to everyone and Happy New Year.

